

## Message Text

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47 41

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

OMB-01 SY-10 OPR-02 PC-04 AID-20 DRC-01 /186 W

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R 261400Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9583

INFO USCINCSO

AMCONSUL CALI UNN

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN UNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOGOTA 7943

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, CO

SUBJECT: GOC OFFICIALS PREDICT END OF MONTH-LONG TEACHERS STRIKE

CINCSO FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS STRIKE CALLED FOR BY THE COLOMBIAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (FECODE) AT ITS JUNE 1973 CONVENTION, HAS BEEN IN EFFECT IN SOME DEPARTMENTS SINCE MID-AUGUST. GOC SOURCES TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT ONLY SIX OF TWENTY-TWO DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED. THEY ESTIMATED THAT 70 PERCENT OF BOGOTA PRIMARY TEACHERS MAY BE PARTICIPATING, BUT THAT FEWER THAN 30 PERCENT HAD JOINED THE STRIKE IN THE OTHER FIVE DEPARTMENTS. THE MINISTRY OF LABOR DECLARED THE STRIKE ILLEGAL (PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ARE PRO-

HIBITED FROM STRIKING) EMBARGOED UNION FUNDS, AND THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTAL MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION HAVE ADOPTED A HARD-LINE POLICY URGED BY PRESIDENT PASTRANA WHICH INCLUDES THE SUSPENSION OF STRIKERS WITHOUT PAY FOR LOST-TIME AND REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE  
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STRIKERS. NEVERTHELESS, FECODE HAS CALLED THE STRIKE A NATION-

WIDE SUCCESS AND HAS VOWED THAT IT WILL GO ON UNTIL UNION DEMANDS ARE MET. LABOR MINISTRY AND EDUCATION MINISTRY OFFICIALS EXPECT THE STRIKE TO END SHORTLY AFTER PAYDAY, SEPTEMBER 28. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO GOC LABOR AND EDUCATION MINISTRIES SOURCES, FECODE DEMANDS INCLUDE WAGE INCREASES, TENURE FOR PART-TIME TEACHERS, AND FECODE PARTICIPATION IN THE DRAFTING OF AN EDUCATION STATUTE. FECODE ALLEGES THESE DEMANDS WERE PROMISED BY THE GOC FOLLOWING A BRIEF STRIKE IN APRIL, 1973. THE GOC SOURCES TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE WAGE INCREASES WERE TIED TO SUFFICIENT INCREASES IN THE DEPARTMENTAL EDUCATION BUDGETS, WHICH DID NOT OCCUR. THEY CLAIMED, FURTHERMORE, THAT TEACHERS, INCLUDING FECODE REPS, WERE CONSULTED ON THE DRAFT STATUTE, WHICH IS NOW BEING REVISED TO INCLUDE SOME OF THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS. THESE SOURCES HAVE CONCLUDED THAT WHILE THE TEACHERS INTEREST IN HIGHER SALARIES IS UNDERSTANDABLE, THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE STRIKE LEADERS, WHO ARE EXTREME-LEFTISTS, APPEARED TO BE TO EMBARRASS THE GOC.

2. BOTH GOC SOURCES THOUGHT THE STRIKE WOULD GENERALLY END SHORTLY AFTER PAYDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 WHEN THE WILLINGNESS OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS TO ENFORCE THE HARD-LINE POLICY WILL BE DEMONSTRATED, BUT THE LABOR MI-

NISTRY SOURCE THOUGHT THAT THE STRIKE MIGHT LAST LONGER IN BOGOTA, SINCE FECODES BOGOTA AFFILIATE, ADE, IS QUITE MILITANT, AND HAS SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO SUBSIDIZE KEY LEADERS. HE NOTED THAT ADE HAD DEPOSITED ITS FUNDS IN INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS SEVERAL MONTHS AGO TO AVOID THE EMBARGO UNDER WHICH WAS ISSUED SEPTEMBER 11.

3. DEMONSTRATING STRIKERS AND POLICE HAVE CLASHED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, PARTICULARLY IN BOGOTA, AND OVER 100 FECODE LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN DETAINED FOR BRIEF PERIODS. LATE LAST WEEK, POLICE EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED A LARGER PROTEST, WHICH INCLUDED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO, IN ADDITION TO SUPPORTING THE TEACHERS, WERE PROTESTING THE PRESENCE IN COLOMBIA OF CHILEAN GENERAL PALACIOS.

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4. FINALLY, THE LABOR MINISTRY SOURCE BELITTLED THE STRIKE AS A BIENNIAL EVENT BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION BY THE NEWS MEDIA SINCE IT WAS CONCENTRATED IN BOGOTA. HE THOUGHT THAT WHEN THE SITUATION RETURNED TO NORMAL, A WAY WOULD BE NEGOTIATED WITH THE STRIKING TEACHERS TO PROLONG THE SCHOOL YEAR AND THEREBY PROVIDE THE STUDENT WITH EDUCATION AND THE TEACHERS WITH A WAY OF MAKING UP THEIR LOST SALARIES.  
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## Message Attributes

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